

GUIDANCE REGARDING OUTDOOR, ABOVE-GROUND SWIMMING POOLS

There has been much discussion regarding whether or not an outdoor, above-ground swimming pool may be able to utilize a retractable, lockable ladder in lieu of fencing or other barrier around the ladder (see the current 6th Edition Building Code, Section 421 or the new 7th Edition Building Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, Appendix 120.M).

After measured deliberation, the BBRS affirms the following:

1. The pool wall of an outdoor, above-ground pool (with pool walls extending at least 48 inches above grade at all points along the pool), substitutes for a fence or other barrier around the pool with the exception of the ladder area of the pool.
2. A retractable, lockable ladder, that cannot be removed (without tools or special knowledge available to a small child), which retracts, by hinge or sliding mechanism, to 48 inches or more above the finished grade level and has provision for securing in the retracted mode with a locking device, shall be considered an acceptable alternative to the applicable required enclosure (fence or other gate barrier) of the current 6th Edition Building Code, Section 421 or the new 7th Edition Building Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, Appendix 120.M.
3. The retractable ladder locking/release device must be located at least 54 inches above the finished grade level in immediate vicinity of the retractable ladder or such locking/release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the ladder (forcing “reach around”) and located at least three (3) inches below the top of the ladder and the ladder shall not have an opening greater than ½ inch within 18 inches of the locking/release mechanism.